

Project Activity Log

Learner Name P. Turner Learner number XXXX
 Centre Name Projects High Centre Number XXXXX
 Unit Name Dissertation Unit number P301
 Teacher Assessor Mr Smith

Proposed project title Is the mind the same as the brain?

This form should be used to record the process of your project and be submitted as evidence with the final piece of work.

You may want to discuss:

- what you have done (eg, from one week to the next)
- if you are working in a group, what discussions you have had
- any changes that you have or will need to make to your plans
- what resources you have found or hope to find
- what problems you are encountering and how you are solving them
- what you are going to do next

Date	Comments
1/10/2012	We have been having lessons as preparation for our Extended Project and have just been asked to start thinking about our project titles. I have various ideas and I need to do some research to help decide on exactly what I should do. I am mainly interested in doing something relating to the mind as this has been the most interesting thing I have studied this year at school.
8/10/2012	We have had a session in the library and I have had my first tutorial with Mr Smith. He advised me that I have to choose a specific question for my project. I was thinking I could use the title 'What is the mind?' but this seems to be too broad. He advised me to do some research online to find out what topics people are arguing about.
16/10/2012	We have just had a lesson where the whole structure of the project has been explained to us. This has been really helpful and I have started to fill in my project proposal form, even though I've still not made up my mind about my title. I'm getting a bit worried about this as other people seem to know exactly what they are doing. Over half-term I shall try to find some books and articles to get some more ideas.
23/10/2012	I found a really useful website called 'closer to truth' which has interviews with lots of scientists and philosophers. I've been watching several of the talks about consciousness. I think that I could focus on the question of the mind/ body problem. I've looked on Amazon for books written by some of the people in the interviews and I've ordered a book. I've now finished my project proposal form. I've also ordered the student guide for the EPQ.
2/11/2012	Mr Smith looked at my project proposal form. He said that I needed to explain the reasons for my choice of project more fully and also that I needed to put in a more detailed plan. I've tried to do this based on the outline of the different sections of the project which we were given. On the Edexcel website there is a useful voice-over presentation. The examiner goes on a bit but I found the section on the literature review really useful. I've started researching and making notes and I'm keeping my bibliography up-to-date.

Date	Comments
9/11/2012	I am starting to lose my way with the literature review. I've found lots of websites and also a review article and I really don't know which bits I'm supposed to be including. Next week we are all having a trip to our local university where the librarian has offered to help us. I'm hoping this will help me get back on track. I've managed to make a few more notes but not much more.
15/11/2012	The visit to the university was really helpful. They did a session for us explaining what a literature review is. Apparently the key thing is to tell the story of the main ideas behind your project. I've decided to organise mine around different theories and look at how they developed historically. I checked this with Mr Smith and he thought it was a good idea. I've actually made a plan for the literature review and am now organising all the notes I've made to work out what fits where. I would like to get on with writing this now but unfortunately we have mock exams to revise for.
25/11/2012	I almost had a total disaster. My flash-drive broke and I thought for a moment I'd lost my entire project. Luckily I had emailed a draft of my literature review to Mr Smith so I found it again in my 'sent items' box.
2/12/2012	Under a lot of pressure. We are supposed to hand-in the literature review in 4 days time and I've still got loads to do. Also Biology coursework is due at the end of the week. I am working late tonight and luckily I've got some free periods tomorrow afternoon when I hope to get more done.
3/12/2012	I'm pleased with what I've done. I've written 1800 words and covered Descartes and the main arguments of his critics. I've also written a section about how modern psychology developed out of philosophy and how brain scanning is now an important part of the process. Tweeted to #EPQ to say I'm nearly at my first milestone.
6/12/2012	I have handed in my first draft of the literature review and I'm now waiting to hear from Mr Smith. In the meantime I've been updating my bibliography. A friend pointed out that if you use the 'references' 'insert citation' option on Word then you can put in all your source details and the computer will then generate the bibliography for you. I wish I'd known this at the start of the course.
13/12/2012	Nearly the end of term. Mr Smith has given me back my literature review. He says that I've done some good research and have a reasonable range of sources. However I have to work on evaluating the reliability of each source and also I need to link the sources together to make the literature review more like a story. He wondered as well whether I'd thought of talking to an educational psychologist. There is someone he knows who visits the school and if I'd like to, he said he'd put me in touch. Sounds like a good idea.
5/01/2012	I didn't write much over Christmas but I did manage to finish reading 'The mysterious flame' which has given me a lot of ideas for the discussion section. My main problem now is that I have all this stuff about lots of theories and I really don't know what I think myself.
15/01/2012	Yikes. We've just been told that we have to have the discussion section written by the end of the month. In the EPQ class today, we did a 'work-in-progress' seminar when we all had to talk about our projects. I thought this went OK - quite a few of the group still haven't finished their literature reviews. At least I'm a bit further on than that. When I was explaining the different theories, someone in the group said that he thought that we will probably never know what the mind is. This has set me thinking about whether there is a right answer to my question. Maybe we will never understand the mind. Maybe it is a mistake trying to come up with a 'theory' to explain it. But this does make my project seem pretty pointless.
22/01/2012	It is just over a week to go before the discussion is due in. We have also had modules. I really don't think it is fair setting these deadlines. I said so to Mr Smith but he pointed out that a project is a process and unless there are deadlines it won't work at all as students tend to leave everything to the last minute. He said that a deadline is the last time you are allowed to hand in work - and you can always hand it in before the deadline if plan ahead. I find it really annoying when teachers say things like this.

Date	Comments
31/01/2013	I had to stay up very late and I'm not very happy with the discussion I've written but it will have to do. We had an EPQ class last week when Mr Smith explained that you have to have a line of argument and consider counter-arguments. Actually this wasn't too hard for me as most of the debate is between the dualists and materialists so I was able to organise the discussion quite nicely. What I probably haven't done very well is to develop my own point of view but this is mainly because I still don't know what to think.
7/02/2013	I've had feedback on my discussion. Mr Smith was actually quite complimentary. He said that the fact that I had used different theories and argued based on evidence from my research was very good indeed. But I need to make my own point of view clearer from the start. Could have guessed that myself. I feel stuck, as I don't really have a point of view.
14/02/2013	Today I had an interview with the school's educational psychologist. She was really helpful. She actually read some of my EPQ and thought it was really interesting. She said that in her experience the different theories of psychology and philosophy are instructive but there is always an element of mystery when you are dealing with something like the human mind. She doesn't think you can solve things using theories. I suddenly realized that this is basically the same argument that Colin McGinn was making in his book. Our minds aren't capable of understanding themselves. So at last I have a point of view to argue for. Apparently the theory is called mysterianism, which sounds quite neat. I'm taking the evening off and am going to sit down and re-draft my discussion at the weekend.
19/02/2013	It is all coming together. I feel much happier with the discussion and have now added a conclusion too and started the introduction. Mr Smith advised me to look back at my project proposal form and use this as a basis for the introduction. In the EPQ class we have looked at how to write an abstract. Most people write them in the past-tense as they do it at the end, but it should be in the present or future tense Mr Smith said.
25/02/2013	Now I have a full-draft of the project which I've handed in. I'm waiting for comments back and starting to plan my presentation. We were told that the golden rule for presentations is 'less is more'. I have been trying to work out what bits I need to talk about. I hate public speaking and I'm going to plan out my talk entirely on cards.
1/03/2013	Making final corrections and writing up my evaluation. I feel the process has gone really well and I'm pleased with the work I've done. We've been told though that we need to focus on weaknesses and gaps in our projects. I think, looking back, that I would have picked a more specific question if I was starting again. The topic I chose turned out to be huge. I could have written a whole project by just focussing on one particular theory, rather than trying to cover all of them.
6/03/2013	I've printed out my project and am just proof-reading now. I've printed it out using 1.15 spacing and have to add a table of contents and a title page. During the EPQ class was did a dry-run of the presentation. Mine was a disaster. I had to stop after 20 minutes and realized I've got far too much to talk about. I'm going to focus on just the mysterianism theory for my final talk.
8/03/2013	Finished. I did my presentation and just about kept to time. I also managed not to just read from my cards, which I did in the rehearsal. Mr Smith and the Head were watching. The Head asked me to explain what I thought I had learned from doing an EPQ. Mr Smith asked me if my theory wasn't a bit unscientific! I don't know how it went but they seemed pleased and my friends in the audience said I'd done really well. I've definitely enjoyed doing the EPQ though I'd no idea how much work it would be.